

TOPOF THE WORLD



PRAVIND KUMAR  
Mauritius PM

MAURITIUS  
PM dissolves Parliament, calls election

Port Louis: Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth dissolved parliament on Sunday and said the Indian Ocean island would hold a general election on November 7. The country, a popular tourist destination and one of Africa's most stable nations, holds elections every five years, with the last one in 2014. By law, the country has between 30 and 150 days to organise elections after the prime minister dissolves parliament. "I have advised the president of the republic to dissolve Parliament and to issue the writ for general elections," he said.

USA  
9 shot, 4 killed in shooting at Kansas bar

Kansas City: Authorities say a gunman entered a Kansas City, Kansas, bar and shot nine people, fatally wounding four. KSHB-TV reports that officers were called Sunday at 1.30 am (local time) to the Tequila KC Bar for a shooting. Police said someone entered the bar and opened fire. Four people were shot dead inside the bar. Five others were taken to a hospital in stable condition for treatment. No one has been arrested in the shooting. Authorities do not know if there is more than one shooter. The motive for the shooting is also unknown.

IRAQ  
PM pledges reforms to calm angry protests

Baghdad: Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi's cabinet issued a series of reforms early Sunday after an "extraordinary" session overnight in response to sweeping anti-government rallies that have left nearly 100 dead. In response to staggering youth unemployment, which has reached around 25 per cent according to the World Bank, the government said it would create large market complexes and boost benefits for those without work.

IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY HEATS UP

# 2nd whistleblower has firsthand info on Trump-Ukraine call: lawyer

ANNIE KARNI  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 6

A LAWYER for the whistleblower whose complaint set off an impeachment inquiry of US President Donald Trump said Sunday that the same legal team was now representing a second whistleblower, an intelligence official with firsthand knowledge of the president's interactions with Ukraine.

The new whistleblower "made a protected disclosure under the law and cannot be retaliated against," Mark Zaid, one of the lawyers, said on Twitter.

Zaid confirmed an ABC News report which said the new whistleblower had been interviewed by the intelligence community's inspector general's of-



Democrats accuse Trump of using the powers of his office to pressure the Ukrainian President in a phone call to investigate political rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter. AP

ice, but had not yet communicated with any congressional committees.

Another member of the legal team confirmed on Twitter that the firm was representing "mul-

tiple whistleblowers."

It is not clear if the new whistleblower will file a formal complaint. Zaid said his client's act of coming forward to the inspector general had secured

whistleblower protections.

The first whistleblower, a CIA officer who was detailed to the National Security Council, filed a complaint in August outlining how Trump used his power to push Ukraine to investigate his domestic political rivals, setting off an impeachment inquiry. Trump has tried to undermine the credibility of the first whistleblower by saying that the individual was trading on secondhand information.

"The first so-called second hand information 'Whistleblower' got my phone conversation almost completely wrong, so now word is they are going to the bench and another 'Whistleblower' is coming in from the Deep State, also with second hand info," Trump wrote on Twitter on Saturday. **NYT**

EXPLAINED  
Blow to Trump's 'hearsay' defence

TRUMP AND allies have repeatedly categorised the first whistleblower's complaint as hearsay, saying the official had only second or thirdhand information regarding the call to the Ukrainian President. But the existence of a second whistleblower with firsthand information would seriously dent such a defence and further encourage Democrats who are carrying out an impeachment inquiry.

# North Korea breaks off nuclear talks with US in Sweden

Says US holding on to 'old viewpoint'

JOHAN AHLANDER & PHILIP O'CONNOR  
STOCKHOLM, OCTOBER 6

WORKING-LEVEL NUCLEAR talks in Sweden between officials from Pyongyang and Washington have broken off, North Korea's top negotiator said late on Saturday, dashing prospects for an end to months of stalemate.

The talks, at an isolated conference centre on the outskirts of Stockholm, were the first such formal discussion since US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met in June and agreed to restart negotiations that stalled after a failed summit in Vietnam in February.

The North's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Myong Gil, who spent much of the day in talks with an American delegation, cast the blame on what he portrayed as US inflexibility, saying the other side's negotiators would not "give up their old viewpoint and attitude."

"The negotiations have not fulfilled our expectation and finally broke off," Kim told reporters outside the North Korean embassy, speaking through an interpreter.

The US State Department said Kim's comments did not reflect "the content or spirit" of more than 8-1/2 hours of talks, and Washington had accepted Sweden's invitation to return for

“The US raised expectations by offering suggestions like a flexible approach, new method and creative solutions, but they have disappointed us greatly and dampened our enthusiasm for negotiation by bringing nothing to the negotiation table.”

— KIM MYONG GIL,  
NORTH KOREA'S CHIEF NUCLEAR NEGOTIATOR

more discussions with Pyongyang in two weeks.

"The US brought creative ideas and had good discussions with its DPRK counterparts," spokeswoman Morgan Ortugas said in a statement. North Korea is also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Kim downplayed the US gestures. "The US raised expectations by offering suggestions like a flexible approach, new method and creative solutions, but they have disappointed us greatly and dampened our enthusiasm for negotiation by bringing nothing to the negotiation table," he said.

The Swedish foreign office declined to give details on the invitation for new talks, or whether Pyongyang accepted. **REUTERS**



North Korean negotiator Kim Miyong Gil reads a statement outside the North Korean Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden. AP



Anti-government protesters in Hong Kong on Sunday. Reuters

# Petrol bombs and teargas rock Hong Kong, scores arrested for defying mask ban

DONNY KWOK & POPPY MCPHERSON  
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 6

HONG KONG police and protesters clashed on Sunday as tens of thousands marched through the central city wearing face masks in defiance of colonial-era emergency powers which threaten them with a year in prison for hiding their faces.

Police fired teargas and baton charged protesters in several locations, while some protesters threw bricks and petrol bombs at police, as night began to fall.

## In the first arrests under the new emergency laws, police detained protesters, tied their wrists with cable and unmasked their faces

In the first arrests under the new emergency laws, police detained scores of protesters, tied their wrists with cable and unmasked their faces before placing them on buses. Others lay in foetal positions on the ground, their wrists tied behind their backs, after being subdued with pepper spray and batons.

"The anti-mask law just fuels

our anger and more will people come on to the street," Lee, a university student wearing a blue mask, said on Sunday, as he marched on Hong Kong island.

"We are not afraid of the new law, we will continue fighting. We will fight for righteousness. I put on the mask to tell the government that I'm not afraid of tyranny."

Authorities had braced for

two major protests on Sunday, fearing a recurrence of Friday's violent protests which saw the city virtually shut down the next day.

Only hours after Hong Kong's embattled leader Carrie Lam invoked emergency powers, masked protesters took to the streets Friday, setting subway stations on fire, smashing Chinese banks and clashing with police.

The rallies on Sunday on Hong Kong island and across the harbour in Kowloon had been largely peaceful until police began to try and disperse the crowds, saying they were participating in unlawful assemblies. **REUTERS**

# Sirisena not running for Lanka presidency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, OCTOBER 6

SRI LANKAN President Maithripala Sirisena on Sunday ruled out contesting the presidential elections for a second term as he did not make a deposit to contest the November 16 polls.

The deadline to make the deposits ended at 12 noon on



Sunday and Sirisena was not among the 41 candidates who had paid deposits in order to hand over nominations on Monday.

A record 41 candidates representing different political parties and independent groups have placed cash deposits for the election. This is the largest number of presidential candidates who have deposited money in history, officials said.

Additionally, the election will be the first since 1982 when the incumbent President, Prime Minister or opposition leader

would not be a candidate.

Sirisena, PM Ranil Wickremesinghe and main opposition leader Mahinda Rajapaksa are not in the fray for different reasons.

Sirisena, who held talks with Rajapaksa Saturday night, has decided to support the candidature of Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, who will be the main opposition challenger pitted against the ruling party candidate Sajith Premadasa.

## BOLIVIA 70-YR-OLD CYCLIST CONQUERS 'DEATH ROAD'



Mirtha Munoz, a 70-year-old Bolivian grandmother, became the oldest person ever to complete the 60-km Skyrace, an extreme bike racing competition that goes through 'Death Road', known as one of the world's most dangerous roads. The path spirals skyward nearly 11,000 feet, and has likely claimed thousands of lives.

# US delegation visits PoK, meets leaders

Pak says Congressional delegation to assess post-August 5 situation in PoK

SAJJAD HUSSAIN  
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 6

A US Congressional delegation visited Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on Sunday to assess the situation there after India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, according to Pakistan's Foreign Office.

The delegation comprised Senators Chris Van Hollen and Maggie Hassan as well as Ambassador Paul Jones, who is the Charge d'Affaires at the US embassy in Pakistan. They visited Muzaffarabad, the capital of PoK.

The delegation also met PoK's leaders Sardar Masood Khan and Raja Farooq Haider.

Khan and Haider asked the US Senators to press India to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions.

India has been maintaining that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral

matter between India and Pakistan and there is no scope for third-party mediation.

The visit came after Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Saturday urged Hollen to visit both sides of Kashmir and see the situation on the ground.

Meanwhile, thousands of people from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were stopped on Sunday from marching towards the Line of Control to protest the August 5 abrogation of Article 370 of India's Constitution, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had warned the protesters on Saturday not to cross the LoC.

The march had started from Muzaffarabad, and they were moving on the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar Highway. But authorities blocked the road by putting containers and barbed wires at Jiskool, which is nearly eight kilometres from the LoC. **PTI**

# Nepal ex-Speaker held in sexual harassment case

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, OCTOBER 6

K B MAHARA, a senior leader of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP), who resigned recently as Speaker of Parliament, was arrested on Sunday in connection with a sexual harassment case.

Police arrested Mahara from the official residence of the Speaker, which he had not yet vacated after resigning from the post following allegations that he attempted to rape an employee of the parliamentary secretariat.

The woman had formally lodged a complaint with the police on Saturday.

Mahara is a former deputy prime minister and one of the most influential politicians from the erstwhile Maoist Party, which is now part of the ruling NCP.

He has held important ministries such as finance, foreign affairs, and peace and reconstruction in the past 13 years after the Maoists gave up insurgency and joined the democratic process in 2006.

After the complainant gave a detailed interview to an online news portal alleging that Mahara had attempted to rape her at her residence, the ruling party decided he should resign as Speaker and as MP. Mahara, however, has not yet resigned as a member of Parliament.

He has been lodged in the high-security Singha Durbar police station in Kathmandu, where he is being interrogated.

# Qandeel Baloch's brother held with Interpol help in Pak, say police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAHORE, OCTOBER 6

PAKISTANI SOCIAL media celebrity Qandeel Baloch's absconding brother, who was an accused in her murder, has been arrested with the help of Interpol and handed over to police in Punjab province, police said.

Fouzia Azeem, better known as Qandeel Baloch, was strangled to death at her home in Multan in the Punjab province on July 15, 2016, in a murder that sent shockwaves across Pakistan, triggering an outpouring of grief on social media and igniting fierce debate over the prevalence of "honour killings" of women.

Multan police on Saturday arrested Baloch's absconding brother Mohammad Arif with the help of Interpol and handed him over to Muzaffarabad police station in Multan, senior police officer Mahar Bashir Hiraj told Dawn newspaper.

Arif had been declared an absconder in the murder case. His arrest comes after a Pakistani court on September 27 sentenced another one of Baloch's brothers, Muhammad Wasim, to life imprisonment for killing his sister.

## COUNTRY SEEKS TO BOOST TOURISM IN BID TO DIVERSIFY OIL-RELIANT ECONOMY

# Saudis allow women to take hotel rooms without a guardian

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DUBAI, OCTOBER 6

SAUDI ARABIA has lifted some restrictions on women traveling in the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom, its tourism authority said Sunday, with new guidelines allowing women to rent hotel rooms without a male guardian's presence, and foreign men and women to share a room without proof of marriage.

The easing of stringent regulations governing social interactions comes after Riyadh launched its first tourist visa scheme, as part of efforts to open up the country to foreign

visitors and diversify its oil-reliant economy.

The Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage posted the new requirements on Twitter Sunday, confirming a Friday report by the Saudi daily Okaz.

The commission said women will be allowed to rent hotel rooms with proof of identity — an ID card for Saudi men, residency card for foreign residents living in the kingdom or passport for tourists.

The same would be required of foreign couples, without the need for them to present a marriage certificate. Previously women needed permission



Foreign men and women are also allowed now to share a room without proof of marriage. AP

from a male guardian to rent a hotel room.

Women will also be allowed to rent hotel rooms without any form of identification if they have a male guardian present who does have proof of identity, it said.

The move comes amid deep reforms over the past year by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman which has lifted a ban on movie theatres in the kingdom and the world's only ban on women driving.

Critics note there are limits to the reforms, and point to last year's killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and the re-

ported torture of several detained women's rights activists.

Saudi announced the new tourist visa scheme last week, saying it was aiming to increase tourism to contribute up to 10 per cent of gross domestic product compared to 3 per cent currently. For the launch of its new visa, the country was highlighting five UNESCO World Heritage sites, contemporary art sites and natural sites including the Red Sea, desert and mountains.

Previously, visitor visas were issued only for specific reasons such as for Muslim religious pilgrimages, to visit family or for business.

The one-year, multiple-en-

try visa scheme allows for stays of up to 90 days at a time and marks the first time the country is allowing foreigners to visit solely for the purpose of tourism. Citizens of 49 eligible countries can apply online or on arrival, while those from other countries will have to apply at their nearest Saudi embassy or consulate.

As part of the drive to attract foreign visitors, the kingdom is easing strict dress codes for tourist women, requiring shoulders and knees to be covered in public but not demanding they wear the full-body abaya, according to guidelines posted on its visa information website. **AP**